

# CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

## Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

### Minutes of Meeting 97-1

held

Friday, 14 February 1997, at 2:00 p.m. in LB 922-4

**Present:** Dr. D.J. Taddeo (Chair); Dr. M.O. Ahmad; Dr. J.W. Atwood; Dr. C. Bédard; Dr. R. Bhat; Ms. C. Blaquièrè (Undergrad. Rep.); Dr. J. Campanelli; Ms. M. Corsi (Graduate Rep.); Dr. P. Fazio; Dr. C. Giguère; Dr. G. Gouw; Dr. K. Ha; Dr. A.M. Hanna; Ms. L. Harris (Library); Dr. V.S. Hoa; Ms. S. Kiruluta (Undergrad. Rep.); Dr. A. Krzyzak; Dr. C. Lam; Dr. L. Landsberger; Ms. A. Lappos (Undergrad. Rep.); Mr. S. Melski (Undergrad. Rep.); Dr. E. Plotkin; Dr. D. Probst; Dr. S. Rakheja; Dr. A.S. Ramamurthy; Mr. N. Soliman-Saad (Graduate Rep.); Dr. T. Stathopoulos; Dr. C. Suen; Dr. J. Svoboda; Dr. L. Tao; Dr. C. Trueman; Dr. G. Turski (Secretary); Dr. G. Vatistas; Dr. M. Zaheeruddin; Dr. R. Zmeureanu

**Regrets:** Ms. L. MacDonald (Registrar's Office)

**Guests:** Dr. S. Kubina

1. Adoption of Agenda

**Motion 97-1-1** Requests were made that Council also consider the following two items: 1) Capital Campaign; and 2) OIQ annual prizes. In addition, Dr. Taddeo asked that item #7 be dealt with after item #3, with items #4, 5, and 6 to follow as originally proposed. The modified agenda was unanimously adopted. (R. Bhat, G. Vatistas)

2. Adoption of Minutes

Dr. Lam noted that the discussion of the ECFC Doc. 96-6-2 *Academic Planning: Response to the Discussion Paper Following a Course Forward* should reflect his request that the Department of Computer Science's formal objection to the faculty distribution proposed in this document be submitted to the Provost as part of the department's response to Dr. Lightstone's Academic Plan. The Secretary acknowledged the correction.

**Motion 97-1-2** The Minutes of Meeting 96-6 (5 December 1996) were unanimously approved, as modified (C. Bédard, T. Stathopoulos)

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair wished all a happy Valentine's Day and thanked the Department of Computer Science for hosting the Council meeting.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Nader Soliman-Saad as a member of Council representing the ECSGA and in replacement of Mr. A. Hanna.

On behalf of Council, Dr. Taddeo extended congratulations to Dr. T. LeNgoc for being named IEEE Fellow, and to Dr. R. Rajagopalan for being awarded the SAE Ralph Teetor Educational Award.

In December 1996 the Board of Governors appointed Dr. Nabil Esmail the next Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, effective 1 July 1997. Dr. Taddeo indicated he has been in ongoing contact with Dr. Esmail and briefing him on the developments in the Faculty and the University. The Dean expressed a confidence that the upcoming administrative transition in the Faculty will be a smooth one.

The Chair informed that Dr. H. Habib, Chair of the Department of Political Science and also a member of the Board of Governors, has been selected to represent Concordia on the Comité des universités sur les programmes (CUP) set up by CREPUQ to examine the rationalization of higher education offerings in the province. The CUP has slated Engineering and Religious Studies to be among the first disciplines it will review.

4. CBS/Civil Engineering Restructuring (ECFC Doc. 97-1-1)

Dr. Taddeo provided a brief history of the initiative to restructure the Centre for Building Studies and the Department of Civil Engineering. Subsequent to his accepted recommendation to the Provost and Vice-Rector, Research that Dr. P. Fazio be given a mandate to restructure the two units, the latter submitted in December 1996 to the Dean a proposal to this effect. The proposal, in turn, was reviewed by and received strong support from a committee comprising the Provost, the Dean, as well as the two leaders of the External Advisory Board Working Groups for CBS and Civil Engineering, Messrs D. Gilbert and J. Macdonald respectively. The full EAB Working Groups for the two units have also reviewed and strongly endorsed the proposal. If approved at the various relevant levels within the Faculty and the University, the restructuring of the two units would be effective 1 June 1997.

The Dean also reported the matter was extensively discussed by the Faculty's Executive Committee and the proposal circulated within the academic units for their reactions. He added that, especially in the light of the impending review of

engineering programs in Quebec by the recently struck Comité des universités sur les programmes and the government's clear signals to rationalize higher education programs, the time is propitious to pursue this initiative.

Dr. Taddeo explained that the intent of bringing the proposal at this time before Council was to entertain a wide ranging discussion of it in the form of a committee of the whole, with the view to having the Executive Committee consider this input and modify the proposal, if needed, prior to a definitive vote on it at a subsequent meeting of Council.

Motion  
97-1-3

That the Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science constitute itself as a committee of the whole for the purpose of discussing ECFC Doc. 97-1-1 (C. Giguère, T. Stathopoulos)

Vote: Carried unanimously

On Dr. Taddeo's invitation, Dr. Fazio presented to Council his proposal to restructure the Centre for Building Studies and the Department of Civil Engineering. He explained that the challenge of the mandate to bring together CBS and CE lied essentially in the realities presented by the rather divergent mode of operation of each unit. Whereas within the Department of Civil Engineering the efforts of faculty members have typically followed individual and self-directed paths--a pattern that was termed by one faculty member as a "random walk" approach--the research and academic activities of their colleagues at CBS have collectively focused on explicitly specified areas of Building Engineering, a niche CBS established for itself at its inception over twenty years ago.

Making use of a projected diagram, Dr. Fazio explained that while the operational paradigm adopted for the resultant new unit--to be called School for Building--preserved the integrity of all the programs currently offered at both CBS and the Department of Civil Engineering, it also allowed for sufficient flexibility to incorporate in the future related new domains, such as Environmental Studies and Facility Management. The Centre for Building Studies (in its quality as an entity aiming to address the needs of the local and national building industries in an interdisciplinary fashion) would be maintained within the school, but its scope of formal interests as well as the mode in which these are approached would now be extended to all of the domains addressed by this new unit and be integral to the latter's overall mission. In this context, each of the faculty members in the Department of Civil Engineering was requested to identify project areas related to the domain of Building that he or she could possibly participate in.

In the remainder of Dr. Fazio's presentation as well as the ensuing discussion a number of other substantive points were made on both sides of the issue.

In Favour:

- The restructuring is essential for the survival of Civil Engineering at Concordia; disappearance of CE programs could lead to the progressive attrition of other programs, such as Industrial Engineering or the Ph.D. in Computer Science. The initiative thus ensures the long-term viability of the Faculty as a whole.
- The proposed restructuring has the strong support of the members of both units which must be tapped now; the window of opportunity for taking advantage of the existing goodwill and enthusiasm is not indefinite.
- The initiative offers possibilities for significant synergy in the coming together of faculty, students, and researchers from CBS and CE. The new unit would be potentially attractive to students in architecture, in addition to those with the traditional Building and Civil Engineering backgrounds.
- The proposed orientation of the new unit would be open-ended with regard to the emerging disciplines in Civil Engineering, such as Environmental Engineering and Urban Renewal.
- There will be some saving in resources. In addition to the reduction in the overall faculty complement from 30 to 26, some support staff positions will be eliminated. Whatever the level of resources required to maintain the new unit, it will at worst be the same as the current requirements for both CBS and CE, and certainly not more. As a "safeguard" measure, the filling of vacant faculty positions would be done in a progressive manner, commensurate with the development of the new unit. In addition, operating budget savings would certainly be effected if the new unit is housed in its entirety in the same physical location.
- The designation of the new unit as a "School" is a positive marketing tool, intending especially to tap into the traditional market of students interested in architecture; the name is not unique, either as a unit within a Faculty (other universities have such units) or within Concordia itself (e.g., School of Community and Public Affairs). Functionally the new unit would not differ from a department and its head would have similar duties to that of a Chair.
- The new unit would be treated in exactly same terms as the other units in the Faculty, especially as regards the allocation of resources.

#### In Opposition:

- If programs are retained and will remain as they are, is the restructuring necessary?
- The restructuring may potentially lead to a creation of a privileged unit, especially with a distinct nomenclature and designation (i.e., "School").

- Given its FTE base, the new unit will get an unfairly large share of resources.
- Going ahead with the restructuring at this point is premature; a major decision such as this should be a subject of study and recommendations of a Faculty-wide committee and perhaps await the arrival of the incoming Dean.

**Substantive Points of Focus if Restructuring Goes Ahead:**

- A "business plan" for the new unit should be generated.
- A greater emphasis must be placed on undergraduate education and, correlatively, a strategy for increased recruitment/enrolment/FTE's must be generated.
- Related to the two points immediately above, there is a need for a review of the undergraduate curriculum.
- The forthcoming intra-Faculty indicators bearing on resource allocation will have to be applied without exception.

Dr. Taddeo stated that in moving the initiative forward the Executive Committee of the Faculty will take all of these points into consideration. He concluded the discussion by thanking Dr. Fazio for his extensive work on the proposal, and also expressed his appreciation for the efforts put into it by faculty members from the Centre for Building Studies and the Department of Civil Engineering. A revised version of the proposal to restructure the two units was also distributed.

**5. Academic Planning (ECFC Doc. 97-1-2)**

Briefly outlining the background of the document *Our Immediate Future* (ECFC Doc. 97-1-2) (as a follow-up by the Provost and Vice-Rector, Research of his document *Following a Course Forward*) Dr. Taddeo explained that it is currently being circulated throughout the Faculties for their input and responses which are to be conveyed to Dr. Lightstone prior to the May meeting of Senate. He further explained that regarding the so-called List II, which identified academic programs slated to be reviewed in two years for possible closure, it was the Faculty's position that this list should be withdrawn from the document. The list included three of the programs currently offered in the Faculty--B.Eng. (Industrial Engineering); M.Eng. (Aerospace); and Ph.D. (Computer Science)--of which the first (Industrial Engineering) was subsequently mistakenly reported by *The Gazette* to be slated for immediate closure. In an effort to correct this misinformation the Faculty has placed an advertisement in the daily which states explicitly the entire range of its programs that will continue to be offered.



In Dr. Taddeo's view, none of the Faculty's programs should even have been placed on List II. As the M.Eng. (Aerospace) is an interuniversity program whose enrolment is restricted by a collective decision of the participating institutions because of the limited availability in the Montreal area of working stages (which are an integral part of the program), there is little justification for placing this particular program on List II. Regarding the other two programs in question, Dr. Taddeo noted that whereas the excellent enrolment and the revenue to expense ratio of the Department of Computer Science allowed it comfortably to sustain its Ph.D. offerings, the enrolment in Industrial Engineering has shown steady and continuous progress since the successful efforts to accredit the program. The Dean promised the Faculty will strongly argue for the removal of these programs from the list.

Noting that the Aerospace Engineering program is running at capacity and citing significant enrolment increases in Industrial Engineering, Dr. Hoa endorsed the commitment to have these programs removed from List II. Regretfully, the publicity created by the misinformation in *The Gazette* is likely to have a negative impact on them.

Dr. Svoboda questioned the criteria used in placing the Aerospace Engineering program on List II. In addition to having more students than is actually indicated in ECFC Doc. 97-1-2, the program students' success in becoming employed has consistently approached 100%. Moreover, the program is inexpensive especially because industry contributes in various ways to its overall operation. Dr. Svoboda concluded by echoing the concerns about the negative publicity generated; should Aerospace Engineering remain on the list, Concordia would be signalling to other institutions an abandonment of a program of which the University itself was a prime initiator.

In Dr. Lam's view, ECFC Doc. 97-1-2 is generally positive in tone and it embodies an important concept of linking enrolment with the actual cost of running programs. However, as Dr. Giguère noted, it is not clear from the document what actual savings will be effected by the measures intended in it.

It was agreed that the Chairs of the departments responsible for the three programs in question will provide the Office of the Dean with concrete data supporting the arguments for the removal of these programs from List II. A motion calling for the latter action will be made at the next meeting of Council.

6. Common Standard and Procedures for Graduate Diploma Programs (ECFC Doc. 97-1-3)

Dr. Bédard provided a brief summary of ECFC Doc. 97-1-3. He explained that the document emanated from the School of Graduate Studies' initiative to inform the University community about the expectations regarding the various Diploma

programs the school administers. The document follows similar ones in the recent past that dealt with Ph.D. and Master's programs respectively.

Speaking about admission requirements to Graduate Diploma programs, Dr. Stathopoulos stated that such requirements should be similar to those in other graduate programs. It was agreed that this view will be passed on to the School of Graduate Studies.

Motion  
97-1-3

That the Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science endorse the document *Common Standard and Procedures for Graduate Diploma Programs* (C. Bédard, T. Stathopoulos)

Vote: Carried unanimously

7. Voting for an Outside Departmental Faculty Member on the Search Committee for the Selection of a Chair--Department of Mechanical Engineering

The Secretary distributed the appropriate ballot and two members of the Faculty Elections Committee conducted the election. Subsequent to a vote count, Dr. A.M. Hanna (CED) was declared elected.

8. Other

- Capital Campaign

Dr. Bhat reminded Council members about the Capital Campaign recently launched by the University and urged everyone to generously contribute to it. Currently the campaign is being conducted only internally, but it is critical at this stage for the University community shows to show its commitment to its own institution prior to the external campaign that will follow.

- OIQ Prizes

Dr. Bédard briefly informed about the annual engineering prizes awarded by the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec. The pertinent forms and pamphlets for the Krashinsky Fellowship, the student awards for excellence, and the graduate studies encouragement award, have already been distributed to the engineering units and additional ones are available from either him or Dr. Vatisas. Dr. Bédard urged members to encourage strong students to apply and meet the March 7th application deadline.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.